



2017-04-28 - Lyon

It's gone for three weeks!

The last capitulants expected at Ecully (the delegation of Madagascar, laymen and members of the technical team) joined the green alleys of Valpré. The official opening of the 33rd General Chapter of the Assumptionists is gradually coming closer to this April evening. Friendly arrivals and accolades took place in the main hall of the reception center, which was transformed into a mini forum of continents. As early as Thursday evening, in his welcoming address, Father General Benoît Grière set the tone, inviting the capitulants who had come from the four corners of the Assumptionist horizon to live a never-banal spiritual adventure. Our assembly stressed the new face of the congregation:

"Our physiognomy changes with time. For the first time we welcome brothers from countries that have never been represented in a general chapter: a Tanzanian religious, a brother from the Philippines, a brother from Burkina-Faso, an Egyptian. Times change: for the first time in a long time we have no brothers from the Netherlands, Spain or England among us. The most important is the love of diversity; Not just his respect, but the search for it. In Lyons, I very naturally remember the beautiful expression of St. Francis de Sales, who asked to live "university"; That is to say, unity and diversity in the same movement of the heart (Treaty of the Love of God, Book II, Chapter II). "

Then offering a first overview of the task that awaits the capitulants the father general indicated the expectations that are his: "Participation in a general chapter is an important responsibility; It is an opportunity to exercise government in the form of a collegial authority. This means mainly evaluating the situation of the institute, discerning the will of God on the institute, proposing orientations in the line of the charism and setting standards to support these orientations. In doing so, a capitulant works for the good and vitality of his institute, for his mission in the Church. He does not come to the chapter as a spokesman for a specific group with the aim of "conveying" the ideas of the latter.

This Friday is a long day of start-up, information and hospitality. In the morning each capitulant opened the briefcase containing nearly sixty documents of different formats. A true apostolic library. And everyone to ask a little respite to take the time to digest all this information. A good part of the morning consisted in dismantling the mechanics of a general chapter. Two groups led by veterans of the chapters opened the toolbox of the good capitulant. With 50% of newcomers in a general chapter the proposal was indispensable.

So in the early afternoon after a final call of the present the 33rd General Chapter could begin. It has 65 participants, including 43 voters (13 ex-officio members, 29 elected members), a guest consultant, and 13 lay members of the Alliance. And the entire technical team in the simultaneous translation booths and on the secretarial tables.

At 2:30 pm the whole chapter was in the great chapel of Saint Francis de Sales for the official opening of the General Chapter of 2017. The two predecessors of Father Griere (Fr. Claude Marechal and Richard Lamoureux) surrounded him. It was to their care that a portrait of Father d'Alzon was entrusted, who were called to open the way for the assembly marching in procession to the great hall where the plenary sittings of the chapter are held.

Another sequence could then open. That of constituting the team responsible for conducting the work of the chapter.

The following were elected: Secretary: Fr. Jean-François PETIT (Province of Europe); Pro Secretary: P. Bernard LE LEANNEC (General Community); Scrutineers: P. Cezar ANDREI (Province of Europe) and Fr. Francis TSHIAMALA KATALAYI (Province of Africa), the two youngest of the Chapter.

The proponent: Fr. Wilfrid KASEREKA KIBAND (Province of Africa) assisted by moderators: P. Bernard Holzer (Province of North America and the Philippines); Fr Marcelo Enzo Marciel Muñoz (General Community); Fr. Louis-Martin RAKOTOARILALA (Province of Madagascar). We will present them at a later stage.

The coordinating team is working to set the agenda for the coming days. It was planned this Saturday to plunge into the report of the Superior General with an animation around the three apostolic axes: faith, communion, solidarity. A presentation followed by group work and a feedback. The first presentations from the provinces of the congregation should follow.

F. Robert Migliorini